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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1.    *(Previously presented)* A voice service system comprising:  
  
        an interactive voice response unit for interactively dealing with a call from a human caller  
by using predetermined responses,  
  
        an operator subsystem by which a human operator can verbally interact with the caller by  
giving appropriate responses regardless of the predetermined responses available to the voice  
response unit, the operator subsystem including a masking arrangement for causing the verbal  
interaction between the operator and the caller to be done through a synthesized voice whereby  
to mask from the caller that the caller is talking to a human operator; and  
  
        a transfer arrangement for transferring handling of the call from the operator subsystem  
to the voice response unit.
2.    *(Previously presented)* A voice service system according to claim 1, wherein the  
masking arrangement comprises text response means for generating text messages from the  
operator, and means for passing said messages to a text-to-speech converter for output to the  
caller.
3.    *(Previously presented)* A voice service system according to claim 2, wherein the  
text-to-speech converter is part of the voice response unit and is arranged for providing the same

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synthesized voice to the caller whether the call is being handled by the operator subsystem or by the voice response unit.

4. (*Original*) A voice service system according to claim 2, wherein the text response means comprises a keyboard for operator entry of text messages.

5. (*Previously presented*) A voice service system according to claim 2, wherein the text response means comprises a speech recognizer for receiving voice input from the operator and generating text messages.

6. (*Previously presented*) A voice service system according to claim 5, wherein the speech recognizer is arranged for passing the text messages output thereby to an editing console of the operator subsystem to enable the operator to check and edit the messages prior to output to the text-to-speech converter.

7. (*Previously presented*) A voice service system according to claim 1, wherein the transfer arrangement includes an analysis subsystem for analysing caller input when the voice response unit is handling the call whereby to determine whether the caller requires operator assistance, the analysis subsystem being operative, upon determining that the caller requires operator assistance, to cause the transfer arrangement to transfer the call to the operator subsystem.

8. (*Previously presented*) A voice service system comprising an interactive voice response unit for interactively dealing with a call from a human caller by using predetermined responses, an operator subsystem by which a human operator can verbally interact with the caller

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by giving appropriate responses regardless of the predetermined responses available to the voice response unit, and transfer means for transferring handling of the call between the voice response unit and the operator subsystem, the voice service system having masking means for causing the operator's verbal interaction with the caller to be done through a synthesized voice whereby to mask from the caller that the caller is now talking to a human operator, the transfer means being usable by the operator to have handling of a call transferred to the voice response unit.

9. *(Previously presented)* A method of providing voice services in respect of a call placed by a human caller, the method comprising:

- (a) carrying out an verbal interaction between the caller and a human operator;
- (b) at the instigation of the operator, transferring the call to an interactive voice response unit; and
- (c) continuing verbal interaction with the caller through the voice response unit by using predetermined responses, the operator's verbal interaction with the caller in (a) by giving appropriate responses regardless of the predetermined responses available to the voice response unit, being done through a synthesized voice whereby to mask from the caller that the caller is talking to a human operator.

10. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 9, wherein the operator's verbal interaction with the caller includes generating a text message from operator input and passing this message through a text-to-speech converter to output the operator input in said synthesized voice.

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11. (*Previously presented*) A method according to claim 10, wherein the text-to-speech converter is part of the voice response unit and provides the same synthesized voice to the caller whether the call is interaction with the operator or the voice response unit.

12. (*Original*) A method according to claim 10, wherein the operator generates the text message using a keyboard.

13. (*Previously presented*) A method according to claim 10, wherein the operator generates the text message through a speech recognizer.

14. (*Previously presented*) A method according to claim 13, wherein the text message output by the speech recognizer is checked and, where required, edited by the operator at an editing console prior to output to the text-to-speech converter.

15. (*Previously presented*) A method of providing voice services in respect of a call placed by a human caller, the method comprising:

- (a) enabling voice interaction between the caller and a voice response unit;
- (b) analyzing the caller's interaction with the voice response unit to determine whether the caller requires operator assistance;
- (c) in response to the analysis indicating operator assistance is required, transferring the call to a human operator; and
- (d) carrying out a verbal interaction between the caller and a human operator, said verbal interaction being unrestricted by the range of responses available for output by the voice response unit and being done through a synthesized voice whereby to mask from the caller that the caller is talking to a human operator.

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16. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 15, wherein the verbal interaction includes generating a text message from operator input and passing this message through a text-to-speech converter to output the operator input in said synthesized voice.

17. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 16, wherein the text-to-speech converter is part of the voice response unit and provides the same synthesized voice to the caller whether the call is interaction with the operator or the voice response unit.

18. *(Original)* A method according to claim 16, wherein the operator generates the text message using a keyboard.

19. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 16, wherein the operator generates the text message through a speech recognizer.

20. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 1, wherein the operator subsystem is arranged to enable the operator to also verbally interact with the caller by causing the voice response unit to output an operator-selected one of said predetermined responses.

21. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 9, wherein (a) includes the operator interacting with the caller by causing the voice response unit to output an operator-selected one of said predetermined responses.

22. *(Previously presented)* A telephony method comprising:

a caller calling a called station;

the called station responding to the caller by transmitting a first predetermined synthesized speech message to the caller;

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the caller responding to the first predetermined synthesized speech message in a manner causing a human operator associated with the called station to respond with speech utterances;

synthesizing the speech utterances; and

transmitting the synthesized speech utterances to the caller so the synthesized speech utterances appear to the caller to be from the same source as the first predetermined synthesized speech message.

**23. (Previously presented)** The method of claim 22, further including:

the caller responding to the synthesized speech utterances by transmitting a further message to the called station; and

the called station responding to the further message by transmitting a second predetermined synthesized message to the caller so the second predetermined synthesized message appears to the caller to be from the same source as the first predetermined synthesized message and the synthesized speech utterances.

**24. (Previously presented)** The method of claim 22, wherein the synthesized speech utterances are from an actual voice utterance of the operator.

**25. (Cancelled)**